

Appl. No.: 10/039,728
Amendment dated August 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 8, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination and reconsideration of this Application, withdrawal of the rejections, and formal notification of the allowability of all claims as now presented are earnestly solicited in light of the above claim amendments and remarks that follow.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claim 14 is allowed and claims 3-6, 8 and 18 are only objected to. Presumably, because claims 3-6, 8 and 18 are not listed as being rejected, these claims include allowable subject matter and are being objected to because they are dependent on a rejected claim. Applicants have amended the claims such that they are directed solely to the allowed or allowable subject matter indicated in the Office Action and respectfully request allowance of the claims.

Claims 1 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice and Applicant reserves all rights to re-file said claims in one or more further applications. Further Applicant respectfully notes that such cancellation of said claims should not be interpreted as acquiescing to any rejection of record. Rather, such cancellation is merely to expedite allowance of the remaining claims.

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the present claim amendments, which are described as follows. Claim 18 has been amended to be in independent form by incorporating the subject matter of claim 1. Claims 2, 3, 7-12, and 15-17 have been amended to depend upon claim 18. Claims 4-6 depend upon claim 3 and have not been amended. As claim 18 presumably is directed to allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-12 and 15-18 are allowable.

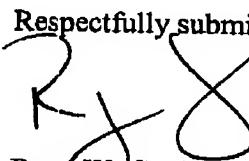
New claims 19-23 have been added. Independent claim 19 incorporates the subject matter of cancelled claim 1 and the allowable subject matter of claim 3. Claims 20-22 (which depend upon new claim 19) incorporate the subject matter of claims 4-6, respectively. New claim 23 incorporates the subject matter of cancelled claim 1 and the allowable subject matter of claim 8. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 19-23 are allowable. As a result of the above amendments, claims 2-12 and 14-23 are pending in the present application.

Since the pending claims raise no new issues of patentability and only incorporate the allowable subject matter indicated by the Office Action, Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments under 37 CFR 1.116 and an indication that these claims are allowable.

Appl. No.: 10/039,728
Amendment dated August 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of April 8, 2005

It is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for immediate allowance. It is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned should the Examiner have any comments or suggestions in order to expedite examination of this case.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan W. Cagle
Registration No. 47,468

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Raleigh Office (919) 862-2200
Fax Raleigh Office (919) 862-2260

CERTIFICATION OF FAX/SIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the US Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. (571) 273-8300 on the date shown below.

Rebecca Kerney
Rebecca Kerney

8/8/05
Date